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The trial of the CIA

Church.

Colby.

Pike.

Not all its covert actions have succeeded, but the agency did manage to outfox Congressional investigators.

By Taylor Branch

There have been enough revelations about the Central Intelligence Agency over the past two years to keep diplomats, prosecutors, reporters and philosophers busy for entire careers. Three separate investigations not only stretched the imagination with show-biz material about cobra venom and deadly skindiving suits but twisted the lens on the American self-image in foreign affairs. The investigations rewrote history—the history, for example, of the relationship between the United States and the Castro Government in Cuba. They showed that the C.I.A., in some 900 foreign interventions over the past two decades, has run secret wars around the globe and has clandestinely dominated foreign governments so thoroughly as to make them virtual client states. In contrast to Watergate, the C.I.A. investigations proved that abuses of power have not been limited to one particular Administration or one political party. They also established facts that few people were prepared to believe—such as that distinguished gentlemen from the C.I.A. hatched assassination plots with Mafia gangsters.

With all these surprises percolating, the most interesting surprise has been largely ignored. And that is how the C.I.A. investigations ceased. The topic faded away so quickly as to make the whole episode look like a fad. Unlike the F.B.I. issue, which has moved to the prosecutors' offices and stayed on the front page, the vaunted trial of the C.I.A. has already become a memory. And the agency itself has survived the scandals with its covert operations intact, if not strengthened.

The collapse of the C.I.A. investigations has been due largely to ineptitude, poor judgment and lack of will on the part of the Congressional committees. But the agency also played a role. Its strategy was flawless. "Those guys really knew what they were doing," says a staff member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence chaired by Frank Church. "I think they defended themselves just like any other agency would, except they're better. They had a whole office set up to deal with us, and I sometimes had the feeling that they ran operations against us like they run them against foreign governments. It was like the C.I.A. station for the Congress instead of for Greece or Vietnam." The story of how they came out ahead of their investigators says a great deal about both the Congress and the agency, and about the problem of reconciling the demands of the superspy with the democracy he is supposed to protect.

In the spring of 1975, the Church committee had been spinning its wheels for several months without much success. Charged with the task of investigating more than a dozen intelligence agencies, any one of which was an enormous challenge, the Senators became ensnarled in debate over how to proceed. The agencies were stalling, hoping to deflect attention elsewhere. Then the committee got a break.

The Presidential commission set up

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Dead, after C.I.A. operations (left to right): Lumumba in 1961, Trujillo in 1961, Diem in 1963, Allende in 1973.

under Vice President Rockefeller that January, to inquire into charges of illegal domestic spying by the C.I.A., announced that it had received evidence of C.I.A. involvement in attempts to kill foreign leaders. The news created an instant sensation. Rockefeller said his commission, which was completing its work, had neither the time nor the mandate to pursue the matter, and he turned the evidence over to President Ford, who quickly passed it along to the Church committee. Suddenly, the Senators found themselves with a large batch of classified documents and with responsibility for the hottest issue since Watergate.

For five months last year, the Church committee focused its energy on assassinations. Other investigations lapsed. Staff members were pulled from other projects. While it is no mean feat in the Senate to obtain sustained, personal effort from Senators on any single subject, the members of the Church committee went to C.I.A. briefings day after day to be introduced to the agency's arcane methods. In November 1975, the committee published an interim report on this one aspect, and Senators and staff alike were proud of it. As an exploration of the Machiavellian underside of American foreign policy, it was, in fact, a tour de force. Yet it failed to build public support for investigating or controlling the C.I.A.

Press and TV coverage was intense but shortlived, focusing on certain salacious details: the gangster plots, the titillating reports of an affair between President Kennedy and the mistress of one of the gangsters, and a few exotic spy plans worthy of a television serial. In this last category, the report featured a C.I.A. plan to treat Prime Minister Fidel Castro's boots with a chemical that would make his beard fall out and thereby destroy his charisma. The rest of the material was extremely complicated, conclusions were tentative, and the assassination plans fell short of the dramatic expectations that had grown up.

The committee did not claim to have found a "smoking gun," in the form of a kill order ringing down from the Oval Office, through the C.I.A. chain of command and out to some mysterious trigger man in a foreign capital. Quite the contrary. Where the American efforts to kill were most direct and persistent—in the case of Castro—they were unsuccessful. And where the foreign leaders were actually killed—Lumumba in the Congo, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Diem in South Vietnam, Schneider in Chile—there was no hard proof that C.I.A. operatives actually took part in the murders. In some cases, the agency seemed to withdraw at the last moment. In other cases, someone else got there first. Of the Diem assassination the committee could only say that the C.I.A. had sanctioned and encouraged a coup against his Government when there was a reasonable chance the plotters would kill him. But no direct orders to assassinate. Everything was a little blurred. Even the most direct written communications, as in the Lumumba case, were couched in opaque C.I.A. language: "Hunting good here when lights right."

Smoking guns are considered thoroughly unprofessional in clandestine operations, where secrecy is paramount and it is a mark of skill to channel existing forces subtly. The assassination report, on the other hand, was publicly judged by *(Continued on Page 115)*

C.I.A.

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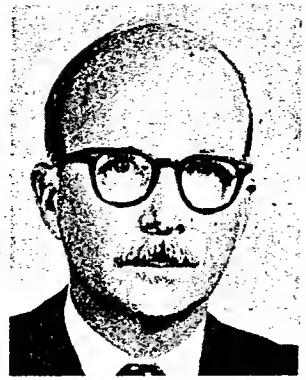
standards built for palpable and exotic murders. Because no foreign leaders were killed outright by American initiative, planning and execution, the C.I.A. benefited from a general impression that it came out of the assassination inquiry with clean hands. This impression is false.

Certainly many thousands of people have died as a result of secret C.I.A. paramilitary interventions in countries ranging from Laos to Cuba to the Congo. (The Church committee obtained some casualty figures but did not publish them at the agency's request.) And, in the case of selected killings detailed in the report, the line between involvement and actual murder is often shadowy. For example, the Church committee reported extensively on the maneuvering that preceded the assassination of Rafael Trujillo in 1961. It showed how American policy turned against the Dominican strongman, how the agency provided assurances of support to those who plotted against him, how C.I.A. officials smuggled weapons into the country and exchanged cryptic messages on the likelihood of a successful assassination. In keeping with its courtroom definition of assassination, however, the committee exonerated the agency of Trujillo's murder on the ground that the weapons it smuggled in were probably not the ones used in the killing.

"By the time we finished the assassination report," recalls the leader of one of the committee's task forces, "we had lost three things—the public's attention, much of our own energy and will power, and our leadership. Quite candidly, we had lost Frank Church." The Senator, according to this investigator, had given up hope of achieving major reforms in the prevailing atmosphere. Public interest was down. Assassinations proved peripheral to the main business of C.I.A. covert action, and the investigation of that unknown realm had scarcely begun. With investigations of the other intelligence agencies, including the F.B.I., still ahead of them, five crucial months had been lost —along with much of the committee's momentum. The Senate's February 1976 deadline for the completion of all work loomed large. And Church wanted to wrap up his investigative chores in order to begin his own Presidential campaign.



C.I.A. agent Richard Welch: Was his murder triggered by the intelligence inquiry?

The Church committee had gambled heavily on the assassination report. And lost.

According to Mitchell Rogovin, the C.I.A.'s special counsel during the investigation, the crux of the inquiry from the agency's point of view was covert action—secret interventions abroad by means of propaganda, bribes, manipulation of foreign agents and, in some cases, paramilitary force — as distinct from gathering and analyzing intelligence. The promotion system for C.I.A. case officers has been built around operations, and C.I.A. leadership has been drawn from the operators— Allen Dulles, Richard Helms, William Colby—instead of intelligence analysts. Veteran agency operatives often say that without covert action the C.I.A. would be nothing but a collection of sophisticated professors with mounds of intelligence, and the agency itself would be only a more specialized version of the State Department.

The C.I.A. approached the Congressional investigations with one central objective: to protect the means and practice of covert action. It was in line with this strategy that Colby and Rogovin gave ground on the marginal issue of assassination, cooperating with the Church committee, turning over more information than the committee could digest, helping the committee use itself up. Then, when the assassination report was completed, Rogovin became tough about information to be granted for the remainder of the investigation — especially in regard to covert action. The committee was floundering; Rogovin pressed his advantage. "We agreed with the committee that they could have access to information for six case studies in covert action," he says, "provided they would go public with only one of them. They swore all kinds of secrecy oaths that they would not even let the names of the other five countries leak." The case study he chose was Chile—a selection favorable to the agency, since a lot of material on the C.I.A.'s intervention in Chile had already leaked to the press.

"It was a bad deal," says F.A.O. Schwarz, the commit-

A Kurdish mother and child in a refugee camp in Iran in 1975—statistics of a C.I.A. covert operation that first sponsored and then abandoned a Kurdish uprising in neighboring Iraq. Some 40,000 of the Kurds who fled to Iran were forcibly repatriated to an unknown fate.

tee's chief counsel. Many of the principal staff members opposed the settlement. What little they had learned about covert action in the course of the assassination investigation had made them realize it was one of the hardest but also one of the most important issues to deal with. "That is why we went so heavily into Mongoose in the assassination report," Schwarz explains.

Operation Mongoose was a covert action designed to weaken and destroy the Castro regime through an orchestrated program of economic sabotage, commando raids and paramilitary harassment. It was the heart of the agency's effort to overthrow Castro; simultaneous assassination attempts complemented Mongoose rather than vice versa. Although the campaign failed, it was kept so secret that the American public was left with a fundamentally distorted view of United States-Cuba relations for more than a decade.

Before the committee's report, it was generally accepted that the Kennedy Administration ceased hostilities against Castro after the Bay of Pigs, until forced to act defensively by the unprovoked introduction of Russian missiles on Cuban soil. The Church committee revealed that not only were there repeated attempts on Castro's life before and after the missile crisis but covert Mongoose raids were being intensified throughout the period. The assassination report quotes the minutes of high-level meetings, less than two weeks before the missile crisis, at which Attorney General Robert Kennedy spurred the C.I.A. on to hit Castro harder.

The assassination report, outside sources generally agree, was the high point of the committee's investigation. After that, the staff divided into two groups, one known informally as "the lawyers"—a group of attorneys drawn together largely by Schwarz—and the other as "the professors," who were generally foreign-policy experts with academic roots or Capitol Hill experience. Under task-force leader William Bader, the "professors" became responsible for the C.I.A. investigation, while the "lawyers" went off after the F.B.I. Frictions developed between the two groups, the Bader group tending to criticize the lawyers as too prosecutorial and "Watergate-minded," and the Schwarz team hinting that the Bader group was too soft in its handling of the C.I.A.'s pros. In any event, discouraged by the covert-action compromise, the "professors" never recovered the initiative.

In the House, the Select Committee on Intelligence chaired by Otis Pike—the counterpart of the Church committee—pursued an arduous and independent course. Created only after a long internecine squabble over its leadership, its mandate weakened by continuing feuds in the House, the committee struggled through the summer of 1975 to breathe life into itself—seeking, on one occasion, to justify its existence by leaking the sensational but unverified story that Nixon aide Alexander Butterfield had been a C.I.A. "plant" in the White House. The story was refuted, leaving the committee with less credibility than ever. By fall, the traditional jealousy between the House and the Senate had flared up behind the scenes, and Mitchell Rogovin, negotiating with both committees, was finding them competitive. "Church," says Rogovin, "held his 'toxin hearings' because he was afraid Pike would do it if he didn't."

By December, the House and Senate committees were set on opposite courses. Pike wanted to impale the C.I.A. for its abuses. Church wanted to show that a Senate committee could handle national secrets responsibly. The Ford Administration played the committees against each other. When Pike demanded information and denounced "delaying tactics," Administration spokesmen would point to the exemplary behavior of the Church committee and appeal for a more cooperative spirit. When the Church committee cooperated, the Administration tended to see it as a sign of weakness and feel freer to hold back on information. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and C.I.A. director William E. Colby simply boycotted all the covert-action hearings, and the committee accepted the rebuff instead of subpoenaing them.

"The object of the exercise," says a Church committee staff member, "was to prove that

Hairy plot: The C.I.A. at one point sought to smear Fidel Castro's boots with a chemical that would make his beard fall out and thus destroy his charisma. The agency also wanted to kill him.

we were not Pike. We were not going to move the Congress or the public by more exposé. What was going to carry us was the kind of editorial we finally got in The Washington Post: 'An Intelligent Approach to Intelligence.'" The committee evidenced an increasing awareness of its public image, of its ability to keep secrets, avoid leaks and work in some semblance of public harmony with the C.I.A. Many on the committee staff endorsed this approach as the path toward "establishing a relationship" that would serve the Congressional committee that was to be set up to exercise oversight—supervision of the intelligence agencies. Some of these investigators have, in fact, moved on to jobs with the oversight committee, now in business. Their attitude was infectious: Even today, many former Church committee staff members are more reticent in discussing C.I.A. matters than C.I.A. officials themselves.

On Dec. 24, a band of unknown terrorists assassinated Richard Welch, the C.I.A. chief of station in Greece. Welch had been identified as a C.I.A. official by a small anti-C.I.A. magazine, and a furor immediately arose over whether the revelation had anything to do with his death. The Senators on the Church committee received a flood of letters denouncing its work on the grounds that exposure of C.I.A. secrets is an invitation to the killing of C.I.A. officials.

Sources on both sides of the C.I.A. investigation now agree that neither the magazine nor the Church committee is likely to have caused Welch's death. He was a relatively well-known figure in Athens, certainly to the kind of organized political groups likely to have killed him. These probabilities were overwhelmed, however, by the emotional power of the tragedy, and the C.I.A. encouraged the idea that C.I.A. critics might have contributed indirectly to the murder. Rogovin would only tell the Church committee that its own investigations were not "directly" responsible. Colby lashed out in public at those who revealed C.I.A. secrets as being more sinister than the secrets themselves. Ford made public statements to the effect that inquiries into C.I.A. methods were unpatriotic.

No single event did more to turn public opinion against the investigations than the Welch affair. As 1975 ended, the press was shying away from the C.I.A. issue, and hostility toward the inquiry was building up in Congress itself. As to the C.I.A.'s private thoughts on whether naming senior officials makes them more vulnerable to "the other side," a move that escaped public attention may provide some insight: Welch was replaced in Athens by a man who had been identified as a

C.I.A. official by Greek newspapers and an American magazine.

On Jan. 29, 1976, Representative John Young, Democrat of Texas, offered a motion on the House floor to suppress the final report of the Pike committee. The ensuing debate was not distinguished. Some speakers argued that the report—which they admitted they had not read — would endanger national security and align the House with the murderers of Richard Welch. Others, like Wayne Hays, argued for suppression on the grounds that the report would be boring: "I suspect . . . that when this report comes out it is going to be the biggest nonevent since Brigitte Bardot, after 40 years and four husbands and numerous lovers, held a press conference to announce that she was no longer a virgin." Views like these prevalled, and the House, by a vote of 246 to 124, ordered its own report to be locked away in the clerk's safe.

The document did not remain suppressed very long. It was leaked to CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr, who in turn leaked it to The Vilage Voice through a series of intermediaries. When The Voice published the report in two special supplements under banner headlines, it became the most spectacular leak of the C.I.A. investigations.

Pike developed two thematic criticisms of the C.I.A. First, he amassed evidence of repeated intelligence failures, showing how the agency had failed to anticipate such major world events as the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam, the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia the same year, and the 1973 Yom Kippur war in the Middle East. Citing various bureaucratic entanglements and preoccupations as the cause of poor performance, Pike took the agency to task for bungling the one function — gathering intelligence — against which there is no audible dissent. Pike's second line of criticism was more substantive: He attacked covert action by revealing a few of the more startling case studies. His most poignant example involved the Kurdish minority in Iraq.

Like many of the world's mountain peoples—the Tibetans, the Meo in Laos, the Montagnards of Vietnam, the Indians of South America—the Kurds have always seemed destined for a hard time. They have been struggling against the Iraqi Government for years. For years they have been losing. In 1972, when the Kurdish campaign for autonomy was in a brief period of dormancy, the Shah of Iran asked the United States to help him in one of his perpetual feuds with neighboring Iraq. This time it was a border dispute. The Shah wanted the United States to channel clandestine military aid to the Kurds, reasoning that American support would inspire the Kurds for another military offensive against the Iraqi Government, thus weakening Iraq and aiding the Shah.

Secretary of the Treasury John Connally, acting on behalf of Henry Kissinger and President Nixon, informed the Shah that the United States would go along. A $16 million covert-action project went into effect. According to Pike's documents, the deal was made in a convivial spirit —a favor to the Shah as one of the fellows. (He himself had been returned to power by the C.I.A. in a 1953 coup.) Even the C.I.A. opposed the scheme, but was overruled.

The agency funneled arms and money to the Kurds for more than two years, and the Kurds once again rose up in rebellion. Their leader was so moved by American support for the Kurdish cause that he sent Kissinger a gold and pearl necklace for his new bride. He also sent word to Kissinger that the Kurds were ready "to become the 51st state" after achieving liberation.

In March 1975, the bloodied Iraqi Government came to terms with the Shah. The very next day, Iran and the United States cut off all aid to the Kurds, and the Iraqi Army mounted a full-scale offensive against them. The Kurdish leader, who could not bring himself to believe the United States had reversed itself so cynically, wrote desperate, pltiful appeals for help to Kissinger. Kissinger did not reply.

An estimated 5,000 Kurdish refugees died fleeing the Iraqi onslaught. The Shah, pragmatic to the last, forcibly repatriated 40,000 Kurdish refugees to Iraq, where their fate, while unknown, has presumably been sad. The United States declined to provide any relief assistance to the remaining refugees and refused to accept a single Kurdish application for asylum.

This covert action remained secret, of course, until the Pike committee learned about it and leaked it to the press. To say the very least, the disclosure raised large questions about the compatibility of such covert actions with principles of any kind, as well as questions about how such decisions should be made. Yet no public debate arose, and except for a one-man crusade by The New York Times's columnist William Safire, the Kurdlsh undertaking was widely ignored in the press. The reason is simple: The substance of the Pike report was completely overshadowed by the controversy over how it was leaked.

Daniel Schorr first denied, and then admitted, being the intermediary source. His behavior helped draw attention to his own conduct and away from the conduct of the C.I.A. Leaks became the issue. President Ford pledged the full resources of the executive branch to the search for the culprit on the Pike committee. The House of Representatives rose up mightily against the leak and authorized a $150,000 investigation by its ethics committee. A team of investigators began grilling the Pike committee staff, many of whose members left Washington in fear. Schorr, three other journalists and 18

committee staff members have been subpoenaed to appear before the ethics committee this Wednesday.

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As the Pike committee sputtered to disaster, the Church committee released its report on Chile—the one case study on covert action it was permitted to make public under the terms of its deal with the C.I.A. "We negotiated with the agency people on the wording of that report, line by line," says one of the principal authors. The agency, for instance, permitted publication of the fact that the I.T.T. had funneled $350,000 into the 1970 Chilean elections, but refused to allow identification of other companies that, among them, had furnished an equivalent sum. Still, while abstract and incomplete, the report is the most comprehensive account of a C.I.A. covert action yet written.

From 1963 to 1973, the report reveals, the C.I.A. spent more than $13 million to influence Chilean politics, apart from what it spent on gathering intelligence in that country. It lavished about $3 million on the 1964 Chilean elections alone; on a per capita basis, this was twice as much as Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater together spent on their Presidential campaigns that year. In 1970, President Nixon ordered the C.I.A. to encourage the Chilean military to stage a coup rather than let President Salvador Allende take power, and the agency tried unsuccessfully to do so through its agents in the military. When the commander in chief of the Chilean Army, René Schneider, opposed a coup, C.I.A. officials entered into talks with groups planning to kill him.

General Schneider was assassinated by one of these groups, but the elected Marxist President took office, and during the three years of his regime, the C.I.A. channelled $7 million in covert-action funds to a variety of Chilean unions, business groups and political parties opposed to Allende. It also spent $1.5 million supporting El Mercurio, Chile's largest newspaper, in its campaign against Allende's policies. Several of the newspaper's key employees were paid C.I.A. agents, committing espionage. The agency produced several national magazines and "a large number of books," according to the report. It had agents in most of the important sectors of Chilean society, including, at times, the Chilean Cabinet. This covert activity, plus continued liaison with the military, supplemented a slightly more overt program of constricting Chile's position in the international credit market.

Whether or not this covert action "caused" Allende's downfall and death—and official American spokesmen had been denying as late as 1973 that there had been *any* United States attempts to interfere with the Chilean elections—the Chile report did not make much news, nor spark much debate. C.I.A. spokesmen studiously avoided comment. They had the upper hand, and did not want to say anything that could somehow rekindle interest in covert action. That, early in 1976, could have raised the sensitive question of whether the United States was, or should be, intervening in the Italian election campaign. The issue did not come to the fore. Press reports that the agency was channeling $6 million to anti-Communist parties in Italy died out without resolution amidst the Welch and Schorr controversies.

By the time the Church committee drafted its recommendations on covert action, the political base for reforming the C.I.A. had disintegrated. The committee itself was badly divided on the issue. Accordingly, the Senators decided not to take a firm position for or against covert action, or even to push for a national political debate over its proper use. In its concluding recommendations, the committee declared that covert action "must be seen as an exceptional act," which "must in no case be a vehicle for clandestinely undertaking actions incompatible with American principles." To these vague mandates, the committee added some rather foamy standards in keeping with the professorial tenor of the staff approach: "Covert operations must be based on a careful and systematic analysis of a given situation, possible alternative outcomes, the threat to American interests of these possible outcomes, and, above all, the likely consequences of an attempt to intervene." These major conclusions were supplemented by the customary demand for more effective oversight by the Congress. "We tended to say that most of the hard questions should be studied," observed a task-force leader.

These recommendations amounted to a clear, though tortured, endorsement of the C.I.A.'s covert-action program. Moreover, they gave the agency enormous bargaining leverage in its efforts to keep information secret. "The problem with the C.I.A.," says F.A.O. Schwarz, "is that once you accept the kinds of things they do, it's hard to argue that they shouldn't disguise it better." Once the need for some form of covert action is conceded, it follows that the necessary apparatus should be maintained and exercised. And once it is accepted that the apparatus cannot possibly function solely under the mantle of the C.I.A., as Colby argued in a recent interview, then something else follows: Private American institutions should be enlisted in the cause.

This chain of reasoning matches the historical process by which the C.I.A. enlarged itself over the past three decades. At its creation in 1947, the C.I.A. was strictly an intelligence agency, with no authority or capability for covert

action. The need for secret feats of derring-do and manipulation arose in the cold war, and quickly became the vehicle for the agency's spectacular growth. By the late 1950's, security requirements were so pressing that the C.I.A. was spinning off thousands of front companies at home and abroad. Inevitably, this led to a rationale for intrusion into domestic institutions. Even though the agency's legal charter expressly forbids it from engaging in domestic activities, the C.I.A. began making arrangements for cover with American groups, ranging from missionaries to publishing houses to some of the best-known corporations.

In pressing secrecy on the Church committee, C.I.A. officials developed the argument from the basic logic of covert action, until it applied even to justifying continuation of domestic activities. The committee gave in on point after point. Thus, the C.I.A. escaped not only serious challenge to the practice of covert action but also the risk of scandal from exposure of operations attendant to covert actions. No one knows just how much material remains buried in the Church committee files or how much the agency held back, but a brief investigation revealed an impressive list of subjects which the committee either deleted or consciously failed to explore. The numerous sources within the committee staff and the C.I.A. who described these subjects requested anonymity.

(1) Two draft sections of the report — "Techniques of Covert Action" and "Covert Action Projects: Initiation, Review, and Approval" — remain classified.

(2) So do the five covert-action case studies the committee agreed to keep secret. According to committee sources, the five countries are the Congo (now Zaire), Greece, Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam. The committee report says these studies show a pattern of covert action and penetration, not unlike the one in Chile. In the Congo, covert actions began before the attempts to assassinate Patrice Lumumba and continued through the chaotic period following independence in 1960. The agency, according to C.I.A. sources, helped establish Gen. Joseph Mobutu (now President Mobutu Sese Seko) and has maintained a covert relationship with him and other key officials ever since.

The relationship illustrates a C.I.A. pattern of developing ties to promising foreign politicians early in their careers and then "sponsoring" them. In Greece, covert actions spanned some of the agency's proudest achievements in helping to prevent Communist domination after World War II. Today, the agency's ties to the Greek Army and secret police remain pervasive — so much so that both Colby and Rogovin, interviewed separately, expressed fears for the stability of the present Greek Government if those ties were revealed. In Indonesia, covert action against the regime of President Sukarno persisted through the 1965 coup, in which more than one million civilians died.

(3) The committee's investigation into the use of classical espionage—obtaining information and using it to influence foreign governments—remains classified.

(4) The committee broke no new ground on the agency's use of American corporations for intelligence work, cover, or covert action. Staff director William Miller terms this a "failure." There was no exploration, for example, of the agency's work with the corporate interests of the late Howard Hughes—in spite of confirmed reports of the $300 million Glomar Explorer project for raising a sunken Soviet submarine. Senator Barry Goldwater, a member of the Church committee, states that corporations "are the third most important source of foreign intelligence, after foreign agents and satellites." Committee sources say the agency was particularly reticent about corporations because the issue opens the door to questions of domestic impact.

(5) The committee is silent on the issue of the C.I.A.'s use of American labor unions abroad, even though former agency employees, such as columnist Tom Braden, have written on the subject. One committee source says "no committee in a Democratic Congress is going after labor unions in an election year." Other sources say it was more a question of time and resources, or an unwillingness to investigate labor after deciding not to look into corporations.

(6) The committee learned of, but did not investigate, the extensive network of American professionals who have secretly assisted the C.I.A. Lawyers, for example, perform functions ranging from liaison work with other Government agencies to legal representation of C.I.A. proprietaries, or "front" organizations. One of former White House counsel John Dean's lawyers worked for a C.I.A. front, as did the chief counsel for Jeb Stuart Magruder. Paul O'Brien, attorney for the 1972 Committee to Re-elect the President, was a former C.I.A. case officer and, according to John Dean, offered the services of a C.I.A. front, a law firm in Greece, to help launder money for the Watergate cover-up. These C.I.A. ties to the Watergate case alone suggest that C.I.A. relationships, with all their political and professional implications, are not unusual among prominent Washington lawyers.

(7) The committee agreed to a C.I.A. request that it classify the details of a report on the clandestine use of American academic institutions.

Question period: C.I.A. special counsel Mitchell Rogovin and

former C.I.A. director William Colby at Senate hearing.

After noting that C.I.A. assets are employed by more than 100 colleges and universities, the report states only that its purpose is "to alert these institutions that there is a problem."

(8) After the C.I.A. issued new, restrictive guidelines for the use of American news personnel, the committee submitted to a request that it classify the details of a report on the question. Moreover, the agency refused to supply the committee with the titles of several hundred books—many of them published abroad, in English, to be sold in the United States — that it has subsidized. "We could have held hearings on the C.I.A.'s relationship to the press that would have blown the lid off," hlurted a task-force leader who worked on the media study.

The Church committee's C.I.A. reports are impressive on the surface—full of bureaucratic history and weighty essays on subjects like "command and control." But the tepid conclusions and the omissions cited render the work incomplete, if not irresponsible. The contrast with the thoroughgoing investigation of the F.B.I. is striking. The main reason for this is that F.B.I. wrongdoing involved deviation from generally accepted standards for the bureau, whereas the C.I.A.'s covert actions are integral to the agency's practices. The C.I.A. investigation was more difficult because it cut much closer to the bone.

"The alternative to covert action," declares Senator Goldwater, "is war." Arguments about covert action resemble arguments about war. If the Senator's interpretation is correct, the United States has engaged in some 900 alternatives to war in the last generation, and the Congressional committees. have partially unveiled a much harsher international reality than most citizens know about.

The C.I.A. operates in a world that is, in fact, hostile and cynical. The agency's environment is full of plots, betrayals and people who are less noble than they seem, and the agency is built around the notion that it can only operate under cover. Secrecy makes it more effective against ruthless enemies. Secrecy masks an element of hypocrisy necessary in a Machiavellian world. It also protects the American people from grisly facts at variance with their self-image. In this sense, the C.I.A. veterans consider themselves a true professional elite, capable of immersing themselves in a ruthless environment without losing their bearings, and of shouldering burdens for the American people that the people would not want to bear or even hear about.

A combination of events enabled the C.I.A. to prevent a debate on whether covert action—secret wars and secret alternatives to war—is justified or necessary. The C.I.A. bowled over the Pike committee and seduced the Church committee. Several sources on the Church committee assert that the outcome was the result of a strategic decision—to duck the issue, under the adverse political conditions that developed this year, so as to be able to take it up again under the authority of the new oversight committee, and perhaps with the assistance of a new Democratic Administration. There is also the hope in some quarters that these last two years of investigation and revelation have had some effect on the political climate, once so congenial to the unrestrained use of covert action, and even on the way the C.I.A. itself thinks of its role.

The record thus far, however, is not one to make for much optimism. No oversight committee is likely to have a better opportunity to control the C.I.A. than the Church and Pike committees, whose records speak for themselves, and the C.I.A. has shown itself to be quite adept at managing the political climate. The agency began these searching investigations hanging on the ropes, and clearly emerged the winner. Its powers, so unique and still largely hidden, remain essentially unchallenged. ■